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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes responses to a survey about the effectiveness of the 1989 Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Program in Seattle (Washington). A large majority of TBE teachers and instructional assistants (IAs), and a little more than half of the principals of schools housing bilingual programs responded. The following findings are included: (1) a majority of staff agreed on the need for a standardized, sequential curriculum whose content is the same as the regular curriculum; (2) a large majority of teachers and principals agreed that the California Achievement Test (CAT) does not adequately reflect bilingual student progress; (3) a majority of IAs agreed that they were well-prepared for and clearly understood their roles, but less than half of the teachers and principals agreed with this assessment; (4) IAs were more satisfied with inservice training than teachers; (5) a majority of respondents agreed that facilities and space for the bilingual program were adequate, and were positive about working conditions; (6) respondents were generally satisfied with the performance of program administrators; (7) a strong majority of respondents agreed on the need for summer school; (8) a majority of teachers and IAs agreed that staffing was adequate; (9) a large majority of teachers felt that they used effective teaching and class management techniques, and the majority of IAs and principals supported that belief; and (10) a majority of IAs and principals agreed that all schools should offer services for both new and regular bilingual students. The responses to the survey questionnaire are appended. (FMW)

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SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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RESULTS OF THE 1989 NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

REPORT NO. 89-5
APRIL, 1989

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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RESULTS OF THE 1989 NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

In January 1989, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) staff (teachers and instructional assistants) as well as principals of schools housing bilingual programs completed a survey questionnaire. The purpose of the survey was to:

1. Measure the effectiveness of TBE, citing areas of strength as well as weakness;

2. Help make appropriate recommendations to administrative and teaching staffs regarding program improvements and planning;

3. Allow personnel involved with implementing the TBE program to have a say in a variety of issues and concerns within the program.

Completed questionnaires were returned by a large majority (approximately 85%) of TBE staff (82 of 94 teachers, 72 of 87 instructional assistants) and a little more than half (19 of 34) of the principals. The high staff return rate suggests a high degree of staff concern over the issues raised in the survey.

This report summarizes the information obtained from an analysis of survey responses. Organization of the report parallels the organization of the survey questionnaire which groups items into the following twelve categories: curriculum, student progress, TBE instructional assistants, TBE staff inservice, facilities/space, working conditions, management/support, summer school, student placement, staffing, staff effectiveness, and consolidation.

Appendix A follows the summary presentation of results and shows the actual survey items and the percentage of respondents agreeing with each. The full text of respondents' comments regarding the issues identified with the twelve categories of items is available from the Testing and Evaluation Office.

I. CURRICULUM

A majority of staff involved with bilingual programs agreed that the Bilingual Department needs a standardized, sequential curriculum, standardized instructional materials, an informal placement test for student ability grouping, and curriculum content that is the same as that for the regular program.

Although respondents agreed that curriculum content <u>should</u> be the same for bilingual and regular programs, there seemed to be some confusion as to whether it actually is. Regardless of respondent group, the percentage who agreed that curriculum content <u>is</u> the same for bilingual and regular programs was about the same as the percentage who disagreed.

Agreement was not unanimous regarding student learning objectives; a majority of teachers, but not a majority of instructional assistants or principals, find the district's SLO's inappropriate for bilingual students.

Respondents' comments indicate great need for curriculum development; i.e., TBE needs a curriculum that is sequential but also flexible enough to accommodate the large differences among student ability levels. Principals, in particular, noted that more time needs to be allocated for language learning. All groups pointed out a lack of curriculum materials appropriate for widely differing student ability levels.

II. STUDENT PROGRESS

A large majority of bilingual program teachers and principals of bilingual program schools agreed that the California Achievement Test (CAT) does not adequately reflect bilingual student progress, that current exit (from bilingual program to regular classroom) criteria are not adequate, that bilingual program students need transitional (from bilingual program to regular classroom) classes, and that counseling/intervention services serving bilingual, at-risk students are not adequate. Bilingual instructional assistants expressed similar opinions but did not reach a consensus on all of the items.

About half of the respondents in each group agreed that adequate procedures are currently in use for tracking students' progress while in the bilingual program.

In their comments, respondents suggested remedies to address some of the needs indicated above: more staff/counselors to work specifically with bilingual students, continued tutoring for students who have exited, and more staff for transitional classes.

III. TBE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS (IAs)

While a majority of TBE IAs agreed that they are adequately prepared for their positions and have a clear understanding of their role/job, somewhat less than a majority of TBE teachers and principals of bilingual program schools so agreed.

A majority in each of the three respondent groups agreed that TBE IAs are used appropriately in both the bilingual program and in the school building.

However, some respondents commented that TBE instructional assistants should not be used for clerical duties, but for direct student contact; still others noted that these staff take on responsibilities (lesson plans, student advising, parent contacts, translating) beyond what they are paid (or trained) for.

Respondents made several suggestions for improving TBE IAs preparation and for clarifying their role: better screening, clearly written job description, more inservice training, better on-job training/supervision, and more responsible/responsive evaluation.

IV. TBE STAFF INSERVICE

As a group, TBE IAs are more satisfied with the present level and content of inservice training than are TBE teachers. A majority of IAs indicated that present offerings meet staff training needs, while a near majority of teachers indicated the opposite. A majority of teachers disagreed that TBE monthly meetings are a valuable means of providing inservice training, while a majority of IAs either agreed or expressed a neutral position. Percentages for principals of schools housing TBE programs fell between those for TBE teachers and IAs.

Most of the comments relating to this item set concerned the TBE monthly meetings. Several respondents expressed the opinion that the meetings are now informational, not vehicles for inservice training. Specific suggestions for the monthly meeting included: have it be an opportunity for exchanging ideas, techniques, materials; include culture specific workshops, make attendance compulsory; and ease access (time, location) for participants.

V. FACILITIES/SPACE

Regardless of respondent group, the percentage who agreed that space availability limited scheduling and provision of service to bilingual students was about the same as the percentage who disagreed. A majority of respondents in each group indicated that facilities and space for the bilingual program are comparable to those for other programs.

In their comments, some members in each of the three respondent groups mentioned the need to integrate bilingual classes in buildings rather than using portables. Instructional assistants, in particular, mentioned the need for more room for teaching and testing students.

VI. WORKING CONDITIONS

A majority of respondents in each group was positive about working conditions. That is, a majority agreed that teaching conditions in their building are the same for bilingual as for mainstream teachers; that the principal tries to assure equal working conditions; and that other staff treat bilingual staff as equals, value TBE, and are cooperative. In addition, a very large majority of respondents in all three groups agreed that TBE administrators should intervene when necessary to assure that adequate working conditions exist.

Almost all comments relating to this item set addressed relations with other staff. Where these relations were good, bilingual staff were highly appreciative; where relations were less than favorable, this seemed to overshadow all other concerns.

VII. MANAGEMENT / SUPPORT

A majority of the teaching staff and all principals involved with bilingual programs felt that it is important to have the support of Bilingual Education administrators. However, principals did not reach consensus as to whether the bilingual administrators provide adequate support for the bilingual teaching staff. A majority of the instructional assistants agreed that needed support is provided but teachers did not reach a clear consensus on the issue.

Relating to the effectiveness of bilingual administrators in advocating for programs and staff within the administrative hierarchy, principals and IAs agreed, in the majority, that present advocacy is good but teachers were less in agreement, with no clear majority in either direction.

A majority of principals and IAs also agreed that the bilingual administrators are effective in communicating with them and in coordinating with other programs in their buildings. Teachers reached no clear consensus regarding the effectiveness of coordination. They did agree, in a slight majority, that their communication with bilingual administrators is effective.

Respondents' comments reflect increased satisfaction, over previous years, with the administrative staff and their performance. Individuals were cited for their support and helpfulness. Many comments offered suggestions: that administrators need to visit all buildings and really listen to staff, that more money be spent on curriculum and texts, that there needs to be an established class/size ratio, that there be a newsletter to share information, and that there be more opportunities to give written feedback.

VIII. SUMMER SCHOOL

A strong majority of principals, teachers and IAs agreed on the need to offer summer school each year. A large majority of teachers and IAs also agreed that the first priority of such summer school should be to serve the most recent arrivals to the district; a smaller majority of principals agreed with this priority. Regarding the need to provide transitional classes before students move to mainstream programs, feelings were again supportive although principals showed a smaller majority in favor.

Neither teachers nor IAs reached consensus as to whether the guidelines for selecting students to participate in summer school are clear; a majority of principals were neutral or unsure on this issue, perhaps reflecting the fact that they are not involved in the selection process.

A large majority in all three groups agreed on the need to transmit information on the student's ability levels to the summer school staff.

Respondents' comments supported the need for summer school to provide recent arrivals and slow learners with additional help. Several respondents felt the first service priority should be given to those students who are at risk, who are language deficient, or who need more than nine months of service/year. Others believed that there should be more free positions (as well as transportation) for such students.

Suggestions for summer school included the need for adequate funding, strong teachers and a standard measure of ability level. It was also suggested that selection guidelines need to be shared with at least one month's anticipation so that teachers can select candidates and that information regarding summer school needs to be disseminated through local ethnic organizations.

IX. STUDENT PLACEMENT

The majority of respondents in all three categories agreed that the Bilingual Student Service and Placement Center (BSSPC) provides effective support for Bilingual Center schools and Orientation Centers. Likewise, a majority in all three groups felt that the BSSPC is responsive to the needs of the Center schools and Orientation Centers. However, there was less agreement in any of the groups as to whether the BSSPC actually provides for appropriate placement of students into programs at schools and Orientation Centers; a slight majority of principals agreed with the statement but neither teachers nor IAs reached consensus.

Some respondents commented that students have been placed at the wrong level or in the wrong age group or grade. They noted that such misplacement has sometimes led to a wide diversity of levels/abilities in a group, making it difficult for teachers to serve all students, and that it is difficult to move students once they are placed. A few respondents felt that students are sent with incomplete/incorrect information.

Several comments were suggestions for improving BSSPC service: that a location south of Jackson Street would be more central, that more staff is needed to do translations, IEPs, etc. and that there needs to be a more consistent way of placing students. There were a few comments directed toward individuals; in such cases the item responses may also have been reflective of the respondents' interaction with an individual rather than with the BSSPC as a unit. (It should be noted that BSSPC staff are seven individuals of different language and cultural backgrounds who work with students and families to determine levels and placement, to orient students and parents to our school system, to translate necessary forms, to attend and translate conferences, IEP meetings, etc.)

X. STAFFING

A majority of staff involved with bilingual programs agreed that teachers are effectively placed in the buildings, with teachers showing the greatest agreement and principals the least (only a slight majority). Similarly, a majority in all three groups agreed that IAs are effectively placed in the buildings, with the strongest agreement offered by the IAs themselves.

Two questions concerned sufficient staffing to effectively serve bilingual students (teachers) and to provide them with native language support (IAs). A majority of IAs and principals agreed that there are sufficient teachers but the teachers themselves did not, in a majority, agree with this statement. A majority of IAs felt that they are sufficiently staffed, but the

majority of principals and a near majority of teachers disagreed, indicating the latter two groups' appreciation of the work the IAs do.

A majority of IAs felt that the staffing allows enough flexibility to serve both newcomers and regular bilingual students but neither teachers nor principals reached consensus on this item. When asked if bilingual staffing standards should be a part of the negotiated agreement between SEA and the District, a strong majority of teachers and IAs responded affirmatively but less than a majority of the principals so indicated (more than 1/3 did not have an opinion).

Comments from teachers relating to staffing reaffirmed their feeling that programs are not adequately staffed and that a ratio of 20-21 students/teacher is too high. Many teachers expressed the need for more IAs and tutors while IAs signaled a need for more teachers. IAs also expressed concern that there is not enough time for them to adequately serve the needs of new students who are very limited in English. Suggestions tended to deal with establishing equality across programs and buildings. Respondents would like to see consistent staff ratios and/or equal class sizes; greater compensation for IAs since the demands on bilingual IAs are so much greater than those on mainstream IAs; and stronger efforts to keep staff in a program so that they can maintain contacts and respect within the ethnic communities and involve parents and community leaders.

XI. STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

A large majority of teachers felt that they use effective teaching techniques and are effective in classroom management; the majority of IAs and principals agreed with them in both cases. Similarly, teachers strongly agreed that they show appreciation for student differences in such areas as culture, language, learning styles, levels of English proficiency, etc.; both IAs and principals corroborated this by substantial majority agreements.

Teachers, in large majority, believe that they are coordinating effectively with the mainstream teachers and this is, again, corroborated by IAs and principals. While there was majority agreement in all three groups that teachers effectively coordinate with Compensatory and Special Education programs, the size of each majority was smaller than on previous questions; more respondents were neutral or unsure, perhaps indicating lack of familiarity with the issue.

A majority of principals responded that they were comfortable in evaluating the bilingual staff in their buildings.

Comments regarding staff effectiveness ran the gamut from very negative to very positive. Some respondents complained about ineffective, inexperienced and/or insensitive staff who may not speak English well and who complain too much. At the other extreme were many comments regarding the excellence of staff who communicate well and are worthy of pride. Other comments suggested that, despite the efforts of bilingual staff, other programs may not always communicate or coordinate well with them, e.g., there was concern over the slowness/difficulty of evaluating and placing bilingual students in Special Education classes.

Some respondents felt that bilingual administrators should do staff observations and should have more control over bilingual staffing, including hiring and firing.

XII. CONSOLIDATION

A majority of principals and IAs agreed that all TBE center schools should offer combined center services for both newcomers and regular ESL students but teachers did not reach consensus on this item. There was no agreement on whether there should be more Bilingual Orientation Centers in place of combined centers, as many respondents were neutral on the issue. Most principals were neutral or unsure about keeping bilingual program centers as they are, while IAs were in support and teachers reached a near majority in support of the status quo. Only a very slight majority in all three categories agreed that all incoming students with limited or no English should be served in a K-12 bilingual school for the first year.

Comments were as varied as the responses to the items. Several respondents indicated they did not clearly understand the questions or needed more information. Despite the majority in favor of a K-12 school, many comments related to the need for limited-English students to be exposed to their English-speaking peers, to learn from them and not be isolated from a regular school setting. Other comments emphasized the need for such students to merge into the mainstream and the fear that students might get "stuck" in an isolated setting. More positive support suggested that a K-12 newcomer school would alleviate pressures on combined center school teachers who are trying to serve a wide range of abilities; other respondents regarded the K-12 range in one school as too wide an age span.

Comments regarding the Bilingual Orientation Centers also ranged from those stating the need for more complete preparation of students to those admiring the students they produce. A strong comment was made suggesting that if BOCs are to be successful, they need to have adequate space and support from the buildings where they are located.

APPENDIX A

Bilingual Needs Assessment

Items and Percentages of Responses by Response Category and Respondent Group

I. CURRICULUM

1. The Bilingual Department needs a standardized, sequential curriculum for each grade.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	71%	73%	78%
neutral	12	4	11
disagree	18	23	11

2. There is a need for standardized instructional materials.

agree	65%	67%	80%
neutral	6	18	7
disagree	29	15	13

3. The District's Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are appropriate for bilingual students.

agree	38%	15%	37%
neutral	25	18	46
disagree	38	67	17

4. An informal placement test needs to be used to determine ability grouping for students as they enter new schools or programs.

agree	88%	85%	94%
neutral	6	6	3
disagree	6	9	3

5. Curriculum content for intermediate/advanced bilingual students <u>is currently</u> the same as the content of curriculum in the regular program.

agree	47%	33%	32%
neutral	13	19	35
disagree	40	48	33

6. Curriculum content for intermediate/advanced bilingual students <u>needs to be</u> the same as the content of curriculum in the regular program.

agree	69%	58%	50%
neutral	13	23	26
disagree	19	19	24

II. STUDENT PROGRESS

1. Adequate procedures are currently in use for tracking students' progress while in the Bilingual program.

agree	29%	30%	51%
neutral	18	24	27
disagree	53	46	21

2. The California Achievement Test (CAT) adequately reflects the progress of bilingual students.

agree	0%	6%	23%
neutral	12	10	27
disagree	88	84	51

3. Current exit criteria adequately predict a student's ability to succeed in the regular program.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	12%	20%	36%
neutral	18	21	34
disagree	71	59	30

4. There is a need for transitional classes for students when moving from the bilingual program to the regular classroom.

agree	71%	73%	58%
neutral	6	10	20
disagree	24	17	23

5. There are adequate counseling / intervention services to serve bilingual, at-risk students.

agree	12%	18%	39%
neutral	0	9	16
disagree	88	73	46

III. INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

1. Instructional Assistants are adequately prepared for the positions they assume.

agree	38%	45%	62%
neutral	19	21	23
disagree	44	34	16

2. Instructional Assistants have a clear understanding of their role/job descriptions.

agree	50%	44%	74%
neutral	13	22	9
disagree	38	34	17

3. Instructional Assistants are used appropriately in the Bilingual Program.

agree	77%	63%	78%
neutral	12	16	11
disagree	12	21	11

4. Instructional Assistants are used appropriately in the school building.

agree	63%	54%	68%
neutral	19	33	25
disagree	19	13	7

IV. STAFF INSERVICE

1. The present means of informing staff re: inservice training/professional growth opportunities are adequate.

agree	41%	30%	50%
neutral	41	21	21
disagree	18	49	29

2. A process should be in place to insure that all staff be given equal opportunity to attend inservice training.

agree	82%	86%	87%
neutral	12	11	9
disagree	6	3	4

3. Present inservice offerings (Language Academy, staff meetings, professional development workshops) are effective in meeting the training needs of staff.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	12%	27%	55%
neutral	53	26	30
disagree	35	47	16

4. The TBE monthy meetings are a valuable means of providing inservice training to staff members.

agree	25%	21%	42%
neutral	56	21	41
disagree	19	58	17

V. FACILITIES / SPACE

1. The space and facilities available for scheduling Bilingual classes in my school are adequate for the numbers of students needing service.

agree	59%	47%	56%
neutral	0	12	13
disagree	41	42	32

2. Scheduling and the provision of service to bilingual students are in some ways limited by the amount of space available in my school.

agree	41%	36%	51%
neutral	6	20	17
disagree	53	44	32

3. The Bilingual program and teaching staff have facilities and space that are comparable to that of other similar programs and teaching staff in my school.

agree	77%	49%	51%
neutral	0	19	20
disagree	24	32	30

VI. WORKING CONDITIONS

1. The teaching conditions at my school are the same for bilingual teachers as for mainstream teachers.

agree	59%	58%	59%
neutral	18	16	25
disagree	24	26	16

2. I feel a part of the school staff and am treated as an equal by the other teachers in the building.

agree	NA	89%	72%
neutral	NA	5	21
disagree	NA	5	7

3. The principal in my building tries to assure that working conditions are the same for Bilingual staff as for other staff members.

agree	NA	67%	72%
neutral	NA	21	17
disagree	NA	12	11

3P. (Principals only) I try to assure that working conditions are the same for bilingual staff as for other staff members in my building.

agree	88%
neutral	6
disagree	6

4. Bilingual Education administrators should intervene when necessary to assure that adequate working conditions exist.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	100%	96%	90%
neutral	0	4	9
disagree	0	0	1

5. School staff in this building value TBE (Transitional Bilingual Education) and are cooperative.

agree	88%	86%	75%
neutral	6	8	20
disagree	6	7	6

VII. MANAGEMENT / SUPPORT

1. Bilingual Education Program administrators provide the support I need to function well (as a teacher) (as an IA).

agree	NA	39%	74%
neutral	NA	23	16
disagree	NA	38	10

1P. (Principals only) Bilingual Education Program administrators provide the support their teachers and assistants need to function well in their program.

agree	47%
neutral	29
disagree	24

2. It is important to me to know that I have the support of the Program administration.

agree	100%	91%	86%
neutral	0	6	10
disagree	0	3	4

3. Bilingual Education Program administrators coordinate effectively with other programs at my building.

agree	40%	42%	61%
neutral	13	35	29
disagree	47	23	10

4. Bilingual Education Program administrators effectively advocate for bilingual programs and staff within the administrative hierarchy.

agree	50%	49%	61%
neutral	38	31	29
disagree	13	20	10

5. Bilingual Program administrators communicate effectively with me regarding TBE services.

agree	73%	59%	66%
neutral	7	23	27
disagree	20	19	7

VIII. SUMMER SCHOOL

1. TBE needs to offer summer school each year.

agree	69%	89%	91%
neutral	25	11	4
disagree	6	0	4

2. The first priority of bilingual summer school needs to be for the most recent arrivals to the district.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	67%	78%	87%
neutral	13	12	5
disagree	20	10	9

3. TBE needs to provide transitional classes in summer school.

agree	53%	79%	85%
neutral	40	16	8
disagree	7	5	8

4. The guidelines for selection of students for summer schol are clear.

agree	13%	40%	42%
neutral	60	33	39
disagree	27	28	18

5. Bilingual Program staff need to transmit students' ability level information to summer school staff.

agree	87%	87%	85%
neutral	13	9	12
disagree	0	4	3

IX. **STUDENT PLACEMENT**

1. Bilingual Student Services and Placement Center (BSSPC) provides effective support for Bilingual Center schools and the Bilingual Orientation Centers.

agree	63%	59%	58%
neutral	13	17	29
disagree	25	24	13

2. BSSPC is responsive to the needs of Bilingual Center schools and the Bilingual Orientation Centers.

agree	71%	55%	52%
neutral	14	20	35
disagree	14	24	13

3. BSSPC provides appropriate placement of students into programs as Bilingual Center schools and the Bilingual Orientation Centers.

agree	63%	43%	43%
neutral	6	34	41
disagree	31	22	16

X. **STAFFING**

1. TBE teachers are effectively placed at my building.

agree	56%	79%	69%
neutral	31	13	21
disagree	13	8	10

2. TBE IAs are effectively placed at my building.

agree	71%	71%	79%
neutral	18	18	16
disagree	12	10	6

3. My program is sufficiently staffed with certificated teachers to effectively serve the bilingual students.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	53%	47%	63%
neutral	12	13	22
disagree	35	40	15

4. My program is sufficiently staffed with IAs to effectively provide native language support to students.

agree	24%	35%	62%
neutral	18	16	19
disagree	59	49	19

5. Staffing allows enough flexibility to serve both newcomers and regular bilingual students.

agree	47%	40%	66%
neutral	13	28	19
disagree	40	32	15

6. Bilingual staffing standards should be part of the negotiated agreement between SEA and the District.

agree	47%	89%	73%
neutral	35	10	25
disagree	18	1	3

XI. STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

1. TBE teachers in my building employ effective teaching techniques in their classrooms.

agree	73%	87%	68%
neutral	13	9	22
disagree	13	4	10

2. TBE teachers in my building are effective in classroom management.

agree	80%	91%	78%
neutral	13	5	16
disagree	7	4	6

3. TBE teachers in my building appreciate student differences, i.e., in culture, language, learning styles, levels of English proficiency, etc,

agree	75%	95%	83%
neutral	19	4	9
disagree	6	1	9

4. TBE teachers in my building coordinate effectively with mainstream teachers.

agree	71%	85%	77%
neutral	6	10	13
disagree	24	6	10

5. TBE teachers in my building coordinate effectively with compensatory and special education programs.

agree	65%	62%	59%
neutral	24	27	37
disagree	12	11	4

6. (P only) I feel comfortable in performing the annual evaluation of TBE staff in my building.

agree	77%
neutral	12
disagree	12

XII. CONSOLIDATION

1. All TBE Center schools should offer combined center services.

	Principals	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
agree	79%	46%	52%
neutral	14	29	36
disagree	7	25	12

2. There should be fewer combined centers and more Bilingual Orientation Centers.

agree	43%	14%	32%
neutral	29	46	42
disagree	29	40	26

3. The bilingual program centers should remain as they are.

agree	7%	49%	57%
neutral	60	39	33
disagree	33	12	10

4. All incoming students with little or no English should be served for their first year in a K-12 bilingual school.

agree	50%	51%	67%
neutral	19	20	13
disagree	31	30	20

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